

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL**

**ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF LOWELL, MA:
MAKING, REMAKING, AND REMAKING AGAIN**

INFORMANTS: ANONYMOUS 1 AND 2 (INDIA)

INTERVIEWER: CHRISTOPH STROBEL

DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2007

C = CHRISTOPH STROBEL

A1 = ANONYMOUS 1

A2 = ANONYMOUS 2

Tape 07.08

C: Since you both chose to, remain anonymous I would, just basically, like to quickly know what section in Lowell, you live in. So, Anonymous 1

A1: Oh, I live in Pawtucketville.

C: Great. and Anonymous 2?

A2: I live in the Highlands.

C: Ok, great. There are several components to this interview. First off, I would like to talk to you about your families' migration history, then talk about life in Lowell, and, uh, themes about your family and such things, as well as social networks, etc. etc. etc. So, we're gonna be working through a list of questions, but I really would like this to be more like a discussion, and if you want to interrupt each other and me that's fine. So, ah, why did you, and maybe, probably not so much you, but why did your family decide to move to the United States? Where did you live prior to the arrival to the US? Did you make stops in between? Etc. etc. etc. Why don't we start out with number 1?

A1: OK, um, so why did we move to US first? (C: Yeah.) Um, better lifestyle. And then my other family had moved here too and they said, 'why don't you guys come down?' So then, my parents and my sister were the first one to move here. After I was a year old, they moved and they were first...from India they came to Los Angeles 'cause that's where my uncles were. So that's where they lived for about five, six years. And then

from there on we moved to Arizona, well my family moved to Arizona, and that's when I came, when I was about six years old, I don't remember. And we lived there for four years. And then, from there we moved to Lowell.

C: OK. Why did you come to Lowell?

A1: Well, in Arizona we used to own, like a motel, our own business. But then my dad's brother, my other uncle who lived here...he's like: 'well, why don't you try out just working.' 'Cause having your own business, it's hard, so my dad's like, 'oh, ok, let's try something else.' And we had family here so...

C: So that drew you to Lowell. Who were you staying with when you, before you were reunited with your, with your, with your parents? Were you staying with your grandmother?

A1: With my grandparents, yup. They were in India.

C: And was that in Gujarat or...?

A1: Um-huh.

C: OK. Um, number 2 please.

A2: Better lifestyle and better opportunities and my whole family was also here. And we were, like the last of the family from my dad's side to be in India. So, my dad's older sister, she filed for us to come here, so we moved here. Um, and we used to live in India too and my dad had his own business. He used to run my grandfather's business. So we all used to live together, and then they all moved here. And then we came.

C: OK. So did you also... are you also from Gujarat?

A2: Yeah.

C: And, uh, did your family come to... through a different part of the United States before you came to Lowell, or did you end up straight in Lowell?

A2: Yeah, I was just in Lowell.

C: What were your expectations, both of you, before you came to America. Did you have any preconceived notion about what it would be like? Or...?

A1: I can't even remember what I was thinking 'cause I was so young. But I remember when I came it was a little overwhelming 'cause you still expect it to be the same lifestyle 'cause you don't know any better. That it's like a whole new environment, but then, as I started getting into it, I was like, 'oh my gosh, yeah, this is totally different.' And the

language, but like, I was in, when I was in India in school, it was [in] English. So I knew, obviously, I understood and spoke a little, but it was still hard, going into school and...

C: How 'bout you?

A2: Um, well, I came here when I was twelve, so, it was totally different because I thought it would be so like India: everybody would be open and willing to, like welcome you and stuff. But, it was so different because there's the language barrier, obviously, because I understood English, but, like people didn't understand me, what I was trying to tell them. And it was hard to make friends at school and it was, it was difficult. But once you get used to it, it's fine.

C: Um-huh. How do you like the weather?

A1: Yeah, I was like, 'it's snow! What's snow?' 'Cause it doesn't snow in India. In some parts it does, but I had never seen it.

C: And then Lowell, seven inches overnight! What advice would you give someone from the Indian community. Say someone shows up at the temple for the first time and they just moved to town. What advice would you give them about...about Lowell? Or anywhere else in the United States? What kind of advice would you have wished someone would have given you before you came to the country?

A1: About living in general?

C: Yeah

A2: It's totally different. It's not what you expect, like, 'cause in India your friends are like, 'Oh, you're going to America? It's gonna be so much fun!'

A1: They fantasize about it. (A2: Yeah.) But it's absolutely nothing like what you would hear in India. So if like an older person came, they would hear tons of like, 'it's so nice,' and, 'you have no hardships.' Blah blah blah. But, it's nothing like that. It's basically the same life. It's how you would live in India, except just a different environment. Yeah, it's just different.

C: So, that's the same for you?

A2: Yeah.

C: Ok. Are you both now US citizens or are you...? (A1: Yeah.) Ok, thank you. How long have you been living now in Lowell? 'Cause you came here from Arizona.

A1: Nine to ten years. (Nine to ten years. And?)

A2: Seven years. (Seven years, ok.)

C: Do you guys consider yourself as being part of the Highlands neighborhood or the Pawtucketville neighborhood? Or does that not have an impact on your life, the neighborhood that you live in?

A1: Yeah. (A2: I really don't consider it much.) (Yeah.) And I've been there so long, so it's, yeah, I guess. What do you mean part though, like?

C: Do you like go to neighborhood association meetings, or do you shop in the Highlands, or do you sort of like have a social network of people in your neighborhood that you interact with? (A1: Yeah.) Are there like where you live in Pawtucketville, are there a lot of Indians living in your... (A1: oh yeah.) Ok. How 'bout you?

A2: There's not like, there's some, but not as much as like...Pawtucketville.

C: So, Pawtucketville is really...(A1: Um-huh)...so, in Middlesex Village too, do you know the part up where the Market Basket is (A2: Yeah.) and there's a couple, there's a lot of Indians living up there as well?

A1: Yeah. (A2: Yeah.) There's...(A2: Quite a few.)...like south Indians? (A2: Yeah.)

C: Ok. So, do you interact with those communities at all? Do you see them at temple or is that a different...different community altogether?

A1: I think that it's a different community all together. Not that we don't, we wouldn't interact with them, but we don't really see them 'cause they have their own language, a different religion and culture and stuff. But we see them, yeah.

C: Do they go to a different temple too? Or, do you know where their temple is?

A1: Well...(A2: They still come to ours.)...to ours. Like big festivals that every Hindu practices, but they must have their own temples, but I'm not sure. (Ok.) I don't think there's one around in Lowell.

A2: No, there's one in Framingham, Lakshmi Temple. (A1: Oh yeah, yup.)

C: Ok, so a lot of them go to Framingham...(A2: Yeah.)...but they're not necessarily affiliated with the temples that are in Lowell, the two temples, ok.

A1: They go there but not like...(Ok.)...stay there. That's the...

C: Is there like a lot of difference. They come for the major Hindu festivals, is there like a difference between the kind or the type of Hinduism they practice and the Hinduism you guys practice?

A1: It's not difference, in like...sorry, it's not difference in Hinduism, it's just small beliefs that we have. Like...(A2: You know with some festivals...)...like Protestants and Catholics, what's the difference.

C: Right, it makes sense. That makes sense. Yeah. And I mean Hinduism is sort of...

A1: There's so many parts of it. (A2: A lot.)

A2: Well, no, like we would celebrate certain Hindus would celebrate some festivals differently than, like some other Hindus. Like, they consider, like one festival is so big and we would consider one other. Like one big one is our Indian New Year, Diwali. That's one big one that...(A1: That's common among the Hinduisms...)...yeah, that's common. So, I mean, it's not very different, but it's just like some beliefs, like she said.

C: OK. But so then, for that holiday a lot of people from all communities show up at the temple to celebrate. Do you, and I'm in the religious life now— do you guys...so, there's obviously the new year's ceremonies that are going on, but are there sort of festivities? I know when we came to the temple there was a lot of food served, very good food by the way, and is that happening at new year's as well?

A1: Oh yeah. Well, on new year's, I just went, it was in November. So, it's when we had it. So, it's like a four-day, five-night event, but at the temple it's usually what, four or three days? (A2: Yeah.) From Friday, Saturday, Sunday...Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, yeah.

A2: One day we worship for like our wealth, and we thank the god for that and have us like be prosperous all year long. And like, it's on a Saturday we celebrate like the actual new year. We have, like so many food items that we offer to god.

A1: It's like a mountain, so it's like all different types of food and people from the outside make it, so whoever, whatever they want to make they bring it in. It gets offered to god.

C: So, obviously your temple is kind of a key part to your social community life in town. Are there any stores you go to as well? Or restaurants that you like to go to that aren't in Lowell?

A1: Indian restaurants?

C: Yeah.

A1: Well the Indian stores, there are three stores, one in Pawtucketville, one in Highlands and one on Middlesex street.

C: I know the Middlesex one and the one in Pawtucketville, but the one in Highlands...

A1 & A2: It's the one on Drum Hill.

C: Oh the Drum Hill one, I've been to that one too. Do you go to other places to go shopping for clothing and so on if you're looking for more traditional saris or can you get them...?

A1: Well, a lot of people do shop, but I know both of our families, we don't shop here. Our families go to India like every couple of years or whatever, so we just shop there.

C: And you just bring back stuff with you?

A1: Yeah, and there's always stuff online.

C: That's the internet. That's globalization... But for food items... do you shop at the Indian stores? Or do you go mostly to Market Basket or Hannafords or those kinds of supermarkets?

A2: It's kind of mixed. It's not like we just shop at the Indian store or like just Market Basket. If we need something like Indian flour or something, we go to the Indian store, but if we need vegetables or something we go to Market Basket for example.

A1: Yup.

C: Are there any particular vegetables or food items you can only get at the Indian store, or do you feel Market Basket provides, or Hannafords, we can't leave Hannafords out. I've been to the Indian stores and they sell some really neat stuff, but do you feel like the supermarkets and businesses in town cater to your tastes as well?

A1: I do feel Indian stores have more specific stuff we're looking for, and plus you get more and it's cheaper. Indians stores, well I mean Market Basket and Hannafords, might package it and carry it, but there's so little in the package that you can't feed the whole family.

C: Is that your experience too?

A2: Yeah, my dad usually does most of the shopping, so I wouldn't even, couldn't even tell you most of that.

A1: My dad does it too.

C: Is that traditional in Gujarati society that men do the shopping? Or did that just happen?

A1: It just happens.

A2: Yeah.

C: That's very interesting. Would he shop in Indian too or would that be a no-no?

A1: What?

C: When you guys go to India does he do most of the shopping too or is your mom...?

A2: Sometimes mom jumps in, but most of the time it's dad.

A1: I think for me it's both. They go together a lot.

C: You've sort of alluded to that your family does go back to India at least every now and then. Can you talk a little bit more specifically about why you go, probably to visit family, but how often that is, how you travel....

A1: Well okay, since I've been here, I've been to India twice, and a lot of times my family goes back because of family stuff. My cousin's wedding. Even though they live in the U.S... it's more fun. It just feels better if you have an Indian wedding in India because you have all the traditional stuff and everything. So that's why I've been back, once for my cousin's wedding and once for my sister's wedding even though they were both here. Like the family goes down there, and my sister went down there again for her sister-in-law's wedding. It's kind of, it kind of just comes around like that, weddings, other family stuff, just to visit.

C: And when your there too you do a lot of the shopping you said, like for clothing?

A1: That's the biggest part. That's what everybody gets excited about.

C: So then you basically go back to Gujarat?

A1: Uh-huh.

C: Is there any other place you travel to see family?

A1: In India we have family all over the place....in different cities in Gujarat. So we visit them. I don't know if you remember, last year we talked about that religious monument that was built there, so we went last time to visit there. We went to see the Taj Mahal....It depends on the time, because when you go there, you feel like you don't have enough time. It's usually for three weeks or something like that.

C: And you also have the family obligations...

A1: Yeah.

C: And if you don't visit they get mad....

A1: Exactly.

C: And if you don't visit your Aunt they get mad.

A1: Yeah.

C: I know that too, the last time my aunt was reading me the riot act because I didn't visit her and I was like, "I've only got two weeks!" How about you?

A2: I actually haven't been back since I've been here. My mom went just in January, but she was saying that it takes a lot of time to mostly visit the family and stuff, but one reason she went was to visit my grandparents and stuff. If I would go, I feel like it would be so different.

A1: It is different. Like the first time I went it was five years after I'd been here and then I went three years later on, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I was just here," but it's so different.

A2: It would probably feel different, like it obviously wouldn't be the same place as I left it when I was like twelve, but I don't know. I just have this certain mindset that it will still be the same place, but my mom said it's changed so much.

C: Do you miss not being able to go back?

A2: Well yeah, kind of, because all of my friends have been back since I've been here and they tell me, "Oh, it's this, this..." and I'm like, "Yeah, I haven't even been back so..."

C: No, I understand. Have you traveled outside Lowell much, maybe to family in England or some other place?

A2: Well just this past summer we were in Canada, New Jersey, Florida...

C: And that was all in connection with the temple?

A1: Yeah.

A2: Yeah.

C: So what happened last summer, because we talked about it at the temple. But maybe for the interview...you got an important visitor, right?

A1: Yeah. Well, this year is extra special, because it's the hundred year celebration for our organization, so the successor of our organization was here and did like a tour of North America and we went to whatever places with him.

C: So people really traveled throughout North America to spend as much time with your leader as you can?

A1: And a lot of people from our temple have.... This weekend is the big celebration of the hundred years, because it started, the celebration started last year at this time in India and now it's ending for the whole year. It's like a big finale.

C: So it's a hundred year celebration. You both go to school here at UML in the Nursing Program, right?

A1 and A2: Yeah.

C: But do you work outside of school, or is it really, are you just able to focus on school? And employment outside of school...there's no time for it?

A1: Well, I worked my freshman year at Lowell General and now I just work in the School of Health and Environment.

C: Is that a work/study set-up?

A1: Yeah.

A2: I actually work at Market Basket. It's different.

C: Do you like it?

A2: Sometimes it gets hard to balance school and work, but I'm used to it now.

C: How many hours do you both work? if you don't mind me asking...

A2: I usually work twenty hours a week.

C: Wow, that's a lot.

A1: I don't get much in, probably about five, that's according to the work study.

C: Yeah, that makes sense. Are you able to balance your work and your class work?

A2: Well most of those nineteen hours come from the weekend. I usually work ten hours on Saturday and probably six or seven on Sundays. I usually don't work on the weekdays.

C: Do you eat at some of the local restaurants to or do you just eat at home?

A1: Indian restaurants?

C: Indian restaurants or maybe you like going to the Cambodian restaurants, I don't know!

A1: Well, we eat out a lot together, but we don't go to Indian restaurants a lot.

A2: We usually go get cheesecake or something!

A1: But I recently went to the one on Middlesex street, the [Southeast Asian restaurant]?

C: I think there are two.

A2: I think she's talking about the one by the Post Office.

A1: Yeah.

C: Is it any good?

A1: Yeah, it's really good. I went with my cousins, they go there all the time and like order out and they're like, "It's really good," and I'm like, "It doesn't look too good," but the food is really good.

C: I've been to both of them, but I think I went to the one on Middlesex before it went under new management, so I think there must have been a switch there. So I have to go back, because people keep telling me it's very good so I need to check it out. Do your parents do that too or do you feel like their more traditional in their eating choices?

A1: They eat everything.

A2: Yeah, they eat everything.

A1: They like Italian and Mexican.

C: That's good. I never turn down good food. Does your family have a garden to grow vegetables or no time to do that? Or no land to do that?

A1: Well, we don't have a garden, but my mom and dad usually have the pots where they grow some bell peppers. That's what they did this summer. They usually do tomatoes, stuff like that.

They like doing that especially when my grandmother is around.

C: So they do it on the balcony of the apartment?

A1: Yeah.

C: That's a smart way to do it. I know people that even though they have gardens, they grow all their vegetables in pots because it's apparently much more productive than you can get in the soil.

A1: And my uncle, who lives like ten minutes away from us, my aunt goes crazy, she does like the whole garden?, she'll be like watering it every night. I'm like, "Okay."

A2: When we moved here we used to live with my uncle in Framingham and he used to do the whole bit, the whole bell peppers and tomatoes and he would obsess in the summer and be like, "Come help me," and I'd be like, "No, I don't like gardening."

C: But the stuff tastes better than what you get at the store.

A2: Yeah, and you feel like you did it, like it's your work and it kind of taste better but I don't know.

C: Do you feel like your parents or your parents do it because it reminds them of home or is it something that....?

A2: It just gives them something to do I guess. It keeps them busy.

C: How would you describe, we already alluded to it a little bit, how do think life is different from India? I've heard two strains, that it's not very different and that it's very different. How do you think life in Lowell compares to life back home in India or I should ask you both, which seems more home now? Is Gujarat more your home? Or Lowell? Or both?

A1: I'd say both. Because Gujarat is my background, that's where I grew up and that's where I'm from. And Lowell is home. Like when I go to India after a while it's time to go back, I mean come back, and it's like home, ahhh. Cuz it's been so long I guess.

C: How about you?

A2: I lived more in India than here right now, but I still consider Lowell as my home but, Gujarat, like she said, is where we come from and....

A1: It's always going to be there.

A2: Right.

C: Do your parents feel different about that, or do you not talk to your parents about that?

A1: No, I think it's the same with them too, cuz I know my parents when we are over there too we are like yeah, it's time to go back, especially my mom. She's like, "I want to go back home now."

A2: Yeah, my mom, she would call us from India and she would be like, “I miss you guys so much. I want to come back right now.”

A1: When my mom went she didn’t miss us at all, because one time we all went together and then another time me and my brother stayed back and my parents and my sister went by themselves. She never called us and me and my brother were home alone and we thought, “Oh my god, where are our parents.” They had called my cousins and stuff because they’re older than us, and they’d call them and talk to them and they’d inform us. And I was like, “Why can’t they just call us?” I said, “Thanks mom.” She said, “I didn’t miss you much.”

C: She was probably thinking that was her vacation.

A1: Yeah.

C: Is your brother older than you are?

A1: No, he’s younger. He’s sixteen.

C: So you had to take care of him and get him to school and all that too.

A1: Yeah.

C: Do you find the life different between the two places and what specifically strikes you as different between the two places? And what do you feel is really similar?

A1: Well, what I always talk about with my parents is like how more independent we are, like the kids, the younger generation, especially after coming from India. Because in India it’s more like you’re just dependent on your parents. Everybody here is like, “I need to get a job,” or “I get to have a job,” people get excited about it, but in India you solely focus on school and then after school you go on to work and stuff like that, but until then you’re basically dependent on your parents.

A2: That’s one major difference. I found too... responsibility here hits you early, you learn to take care of yourself at an early age while in India everyone depends on their parents. You wouldn’t want to be by yourself. You wouldn’t want to go get a job or something.

A1: You wouldn’t think about that over there, “Well, I’m sixteen, maybe I should get a job now.”

C: Do you feel like life in America, or this is one of the stereotypes maybe, or the perception about America is that it’s a very individualistic country? Do you feel that’s having an impact on the way Indian families now live in Lowell? Or is it, “That’s just the way it is,” and so you just go with the flow?

A1: Well, the whole community is definitely more individualized, I feel like everybody is so...

A2: Oooohhhh, out there!

A1: Yeah. In India everything is always happening and everyone is always there, I don't know, I feel like you're always connected, while here... I'll give an example, if I haven't been to the temple for three weeks...

A2: I would feel out of place.

A1: Yeah, I wouldn't know what's going on with other people, while over there you'll see them on the streets or something.

A2: Like the moms go down and cut vegetables together or something, the kids play out...

A1: Yeah...but like here everybody has work and then you come home in the evening and you just want to watch TV or sleep.

C: Do you feel people have to work more here than back in India or is that not a fair observation?

A1: I wouldn't say they have to work more, but I feel like they think they have to work more. I feel like here, life is based on working, the working life. While in India everybody is like, "Oh yeah, I have to go to work." But it's not like an eight hour shift or a twelve hour shift. It's starting to become more like that now in India too.

C: Why do you think that is? Do you think it's just globalization and changing industry maybe?

A1: Yeah.

C: Interesting. Very interesting. I've seen those changes in other parts of the non-Western world too where people are more and more talking along those lines so it's very interesting. I'd like to switch over a little bit to issues of family, identity, we already talked a little bit about your relationship with your parents, but you seem to have a pretty good, anonymous one, relationship with your parents. Do you feel like there's sometimes frictions on certain issues between you and your parents, or you talk things through with your parents, or...?

A2: I feel like with me going out on certain occasions, they'll be like, "No you can't go," but then I'll be like, "Well, I haven't been out in four months." And then they'll say, "It seems like you've been going out every weekend," or something like that. It's small stuff, not huge issues.

A1: I feel like I'm able to talk to my parents, but it, sometimes growing up, there's going to be frictions about silly stuff, but other than that, no big issues.

C: You just mentioned your sister got married, did she get married to a person she met in Lowell?

A1: No, no, no, she met him in India the first time she went, and they both came back and then they went back to get married.

C: But now they live in the United States?

A1: They live in Lowell.

C: Okay, so they also live in Lowell. Do you have any siblings?

A2: I just have a younger sister.

C: You mentioned the wedding... The little I know about India, it's a very big deal right.... Can you talk a little bit about what happened at your sister's wedding?

A2: She could go on for hours probably.

A1: First of all it was a five day event. So the first day is when family first starts coming in, just different family from India. And then the second day, do you know about henna? So, there's a ceremony for that when the ladies just get together and everybody gets that done on their hands. The third night was basically like a dance night, but it's Indian traditional dancing, I don't know if you've seen like with the sticks and stuff.... So that's the third night and everybody just gets together from the girl's side and the groom's side. And they have food there. And the fourth day is when everything starts coming together. They have a ceremony at the girls place separate from the one going on for the boys at his place. So that happens on the fourth day, a totally separate ceremony for the individual families. And then on the fifth day is the real wedding. But it was really big because in my family we have all boys and me and my sister are the only girls and she was the first one to get married. It was an all boy wedding and we thought my gosh, we're getting sick of this, and my sister, she was the first girl to get married in my family so it was a big deal.

C: Is there kind of a traditional partition too that the parent of the bride needs to pay or the parent of the groom like they have in some cultures? In my culture it's always the parent of the bride that has to pay for everything. Is it the same in India? Or are the costs being split? Because I imagine, how many people showed up at your sister's wedding?

A1: I think it used to be before that we had to pay everything, but now it's starting to split. But the wedding part, you know how I said it's a five day event, but the wedding, the main day, I still think it's taken care of mostly by the bride. I don't know about your

culture, but in India, the wedding happens where the bride is, where her family is, or her city, home town. So the groom has to travel with his family and everybody comes.

C: And the five day ceremonies, they often occur in different parts? So the things that the groom's family is in charge of can happen in a different city where the actual wedding takes place?

A1: Yep.

C: Okay, and then there's these divisions of things...

A1: Yeah, everything doesn't have to happen in five days, but I think that's like a tradition. Nowadays people change and want to do things their way too.

C: So India is becoming more individualistic. How does your family stay together? Obviously in your case you visit sometimes. Do you talk by phone, email, or in your case does your family call back to India?

A2: Yeah, we just talked to my grandparents the other day and we usually call them every other week or something to see how they're doing and stuff. That's like my mom's mom and dad and so they live there. So we just call them.

C: Are you thinking of maybe bringing your grandparents to the US?

A2: Well my mom's brother, one of the brothers, lives in England and my mom's sister lives in England and they could have stayed there, but they didn't like it there.

C: Did you visit your family in England at all?

A2: Actually two of my cousins came down a couple years ago, but I haven't had a chance.

C: So they came from England to Lowell?

A2: Yeah.

C: Do you have family visiting you from India at all like your grandparents?

A2: No they didn't want to come.

C: After going to England they said they were never getting into a plane again huh? What about you A1, do you phone?

A1: Well a lot of my family is here from both sides, but my dad's older brother, he has two brothers, the middle one, his whole family is in India. They don't want to come here, they've always been there and they don't want to come here, so we usually call them. For

grandparents, they're old, so I feel like we call them more often, but we don't call them that often. Maybe every couple of months or if there's a big occasion or somebody's birthday coming up. My cousins there I stay in touch with by email.

C: So there's a lot of email contact there too.... Do you find, well I guess you're kind of the email generation, because it's sort of something that happened after I got out of college and it's a shift for me.... So you've always been in touch with your cousins through email? Or was there a shift where you used to write letters and then switched over to email?

A1: Not always. When I was younger I used to just talk to them on the phone, but then when I could get on the computer myself I started.

A2: I would say it was different for me because when I moved here I didn't know about computers or, well I knew about computers, but not email and stuff and so I used to write my friends letters and they used to write me, but now it's like email too.

A1: If I could add to that, at the same time, I have lost touch with them. I'm not as close to them as I used to be. I used to be really close to them when we were there, but now I feel like we've grown apart. I mean I still talk to them because they're my cousins, but...

C: Were you living close by them when you lived in India too?

A1: Yeah.

C: Kind of like childhood friends that you outgrown?

A1: And they were all boys too.... We grew up with all boys....

C: Do you feel like your life is different from that of your parents?

A2: Totally.

C: And in what ways? And if you don't feel comfortable talking about it, that's fine too.

A1: I wouldn't say totally from my parents because I talk to them all the time about it and tell them that my life is so much harder than theirs, they don't understand, but when they talk to me I don't think it's totally different because my parents, they grew up in India, they both went to college, and I know my dad had to work while he was in college and he went away too, so he had to cook his own food and stuff and at that time, that was a big deal especially in India. In America people go to college all the time. So I don't think it's that different. But they did it in India and not here, and everything here is so much harder, it takes so much more to graduate.

C: Do you feel like your parents are pushing you to get educated because they have college education and they see a value in it?

A1: I don't feel like they've ever had to push me, like you have to do it, you have to do it.

A2: We push ourselves.

A1: Yeah, we push ourselves.

A2: We have to do it.

A1: Yeah, we see value in it.

C: Obviously you feel like you have to do it, but is it because you feel like you owe it to your parents to do well?

A2: Yeah.

A1: Exactly. And when I was in India, I remember as a kid I didn't want to go to school, but my cousins pushed me more. They would be like you have to do good, this is good. And if I did a little bad they would ask me why did you do bad on it? So I feel like this is the way I was brought up and so now I push myself.

A2: It was different for me because my dad went to college and then he didn't want to go, so he took over my grandfather's business. And my mom graduated high school and went one year and then she got married to my dad and then she just took over as a housewife and stuff and she never went back. And my dad at a young age just ran a business, so I feel like it was just different for me because I feel like I was the first to go to college and actually go through it. I tell them all the time, my life is harder than yours if you believe it or not and I work and go to school and all that bit, but they're like, "We had struggles too you know,"

C: Yeah...I remember working twenty hours in college and it was a lot, it was hard, so I understand, it's not easy, especially if you want to do academically well you have to put a lot of time into it .Is there anything that you hope, if you have kids sometime yourself, is there anything you feel you would like to pass on to your children, that you would think is very important for your family's past background and being Indian Americans? Does that question make sense?

A1: We always talk about that. We want them to know the language, Gujarati, and we want to pass down traditions, basic Indian traditions.

A2: Like attend temple and stick to their roots you know.

C: Do you feel like you're getting a similar encouragement from your parents to do that?

A1 & A2: Yeah.

C: Is there a Gujarati school attached to the temple? I know you guys speak Gujarati, and I guess you both grew up in India, but is there an infrastructure here?

A1: Well, we do it from the temple, there's volunteers, they teach the younger kids how to write Gujarati and to read, and that's what we speak in the temple, so I guess that's how kids grow up and speak it at home too.

Do you feel like this is changing with the next generation, that it becomes less and less valued?

A1: Definitely, especially with my brother because he was born here. So it took him a while to get the language down. When he was younger he used to say stuff and people would wonder what he was trying to say. We make fun of him all of the time, but he's picking it up. But I feel like it depends on your family and how you're brought up, like if my brother hadn't been brought up this way he wouldn't have spoken, but with my parents and having my sister and me always talking to him, it's helped him.

C: Do you have examples of that too?

A2: Yeah, I talk to my sister all the time, but sometimes she forgets some words because she's learning English. And I tend to yell at her, "How do you forget, you've been speaking this all your life?"

A1: And it goes on with our cousins, the ones that were born here too, it's so funny, they speak better Gujarati than I do, but that has to do with their parents. She actually met them too, we stayed with them, and he speaks better than I do sometimes even though he was born here and brought up here because that's just how his parents raised him.

C: We've talked about family back in India, but I know that for a lot of immigrant families there's an expectation from folks back home that they also support the family back home. Maybe this is a question that your parents would be better off answering, but do you have to support family in India as well or is your family back in India basically economically self sufficient?

A1: Well, a lot of my family is already here and I think my uncle and other distant family are sufficient themselves, but if they were to ever need help my parents would. But I don't think we have to, like an obligation.

A2: Well, my dad's family's here, but I can say like my mom's side, my mom's brother from England sends, my uncle sends money for my grandparents because obviously they're too old to work for themselves or anything. So he gets their house repaired and sends them money and stuff.

C: And I know your temple is very active when there's national catastrophes and stuff, do they also sponsor....

A1: They do it not just in India, but all over the world. Here during the hurricane and the typhoon or something in Southeast Asia...

C: Oh the tsunami.

A1: And the earthquakes that happened in Gujarat, flood relief, I know there were a lot of problems with that last year. So it's all over the world, not just India.

C: Does your organization support or operate businesses or schools that you therefore support?

A1: I think they have hospitals in India and schools for children and something big that just happened a couple weeks ago, the girl's school.

A2: Oh, yeah.

A1: Girls from all over the world attend there.

C: So you said your parents ran a business for a while and now they're "just" working, and you both are training to become nurses hopefully. Did you always want to be nurses and that was it or was there...?

A1: My mind has changed a couple of times growing up. In middle school until my sophomore year in high school I wanted to be a lawyer because I thought I was so good at arguments I could win. Like with my parents, my cousin or my sister I would say, "I'm going to be a lawyer, I can win at anything." I'm good at convincing, that's what my cousins say. And then I wanted to be an engineer; that lasted for six months. And then my sophomore year of high school I started going to Lowell General Hospital for school related stuff, and then my grandmother went through a huge surgery, she had five by-pass surgeries that summer and I was already thinking towards nursing, so my family pushed me more into it, because they were all working and summer I had no school so I spent a lot of time with her in Boston where she was in the hospital and that made me decide for sure.

C: And how about you?

A2: Mine changed so many times. When I was little my parents would ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up and I would say a doctor, but when I came here and realized a doctor has twelve years of school, I don't think I could handle that much school. And I also like to interact with the patients, I also volunteered at Lowell General for two years over the summer and I see how the nurses have to interact with the patients and I like having to interact with the patients and helping out. Probably in high school I thought of becoming a nurse.

C: What's your favorite Indian traditional celebration? Is it the New Year?

A1 & A2: Yeah.

A1: It lasts for so long and everybody's so happy to see each other. It's the one time you see everyone.

A2: You see everybody.

A1: That's when we talk to everybody, even distant relatives.

A1: Of course only one day is New Years, Diwali is the Festival of Lights and it's all about family, basically like Christmas. People give gifts.

C: Do you guys do Christmas too or not at all?

A1: Well, I think over the years we've grown out of it. I know with my brother we always used to do Christmas, but the past couple of years we haven't. But I like the whole idea of Christmas, because people are so happy and I like it when people are excited. It's something different from everyday life.

C: Do you have relatives come to Lowell or people from your organization and if so, do you take them to any specific places, like your temple or anything touristy?

A1: My cousins came over one year from California and then my uncle and my aunt, my mother's brother were over last summer. We went to Boston, showed them around the temple, visiting other relatives we have around here, that's basically it.

C: How about you?

A2: I would say the same.

C: The backhanded question here is the Park, and it's not really directly related to this project, but I think what they're trying to do is switch their offerings as far as...Do you know about the National Park Service in downtown Lowell? with the factories?

A1: Well, we went to Lowell high school and we actually went there.

C: So you've been to the Park because of school, but would you have gone to the Park if it hadn't been through school?

A1: I personally like historical stuff and I know about history, she doesn't. I probably would have if someone had wanted to go with me or something, if I had the time. I like that kind of stuff.

C: What about you?

A2: History doesn't interest me as much, but I'm taking a history class right now and I'm starting to get interested a little bit, so I'd probably go.

C: Do you think people would be more interested in your communities if there was an exhibition, say, on the two temples, or Hindu festivals that are celebrated, or a focus on the Indian communities that are in Lowell? Would that induce you to go or members of your community to go, or is it history and who cares?

A1: To be honest?

C: You can be brutally honest with me because I'm just asking the question! I'm not with the Park.

A1: I feel like the younger generations might get interested, especially if they were taken from school and they saw that it was actually there, but I feel like the older generation, our parents and stuff, they wouldn't care. They wouldn't take the time, they wouldn't care.

C: Do you feel like you get discriminated against for being Indian, or that you're thrown in with different types of immigrant groups when you're in town, or may-be when you were in high school?

A2: For me it was in middle school when I moved here, now it's not.

A1: I think it's changed. The community is growing especially at Lowell High too.

A2: It was never in high school.

C: So do you think because the community is larger?

A1: They've seen things, not just the Indian community, there are many other communities especially in Lowell. There are always going to be stereotypes about people, what are you going to do about that?

C: So in middle school people made fun of you?

A2: Well, I wouldn't say about my culture, but they would pick on me because I don't know why, because I'm Indian or because I just came here, but, I never knew the reason people did it.

A1: I think for her it might have been the age the kids were going through because when I came here in second or third grade, I remember the kids were helpful to me, they'd help me do my homework.

A2: For my sister because she was younger, she was only in second grade and she wasn't having as hard a time and I thought it would be different, but high school was totally different I would say.

C: Middle school is the meanest time.

A1: It is! Even for me, I was here and I remember kids picking on other kids and thinking ,oh my gosh, that's so mean.

C: Do you feel like there are tensions within the Indian community in Lowell or between the Indian community and other communities in Lowell, or that's not part of your experience?

A2: I don't know of anything to be honest.

A1: There might be some things that could raise tensions, but I don't know of anything.

C: Do you guys care about politics? Do you know much about politics in the city?

A2: No, I don't.

A1: I used to when I was going through middle school, high school, I guess I used to be more in tune to it during the debates and stuff, but now I have no time. My dad is into it, so he always tells me stuff.

C: Is he into international politics, or is into local politics?

A1: Both.

C: One thing that comes up and people raise that as an issue in the immigrant communities... they would like to see more immigrants on the city council. In other words, there's Irish Americans and French Canadians on the council, but there's a lot of Cambodians in the city and no Cambodian representation on the city council. Are you guys concerned about that? Would you guys like to see an Indian city council, or do you feel like the city is taking care of your community? Or there's no need for it?

A1: I'm trying to think more about what my parents would think because right now I have no opinion. My dad, when he sees other cities or other parts of America and sees an Indian council person, he would probably say, "Hey, look it's an Indian," or something, but I don't hear complaints from them. Niki Tsongas came over when we did the walk-a-thon, so they're involved in our community. At the walk-a-thon, which we do annually, there's always one guest from the city.

C: How do you feel about the educational opportunities, obviously you've gone through middle school, high school and college all in the city of Lowell. Do you feel like you're getting a good education in the city? Things that could be improved?

A1: I think they do a good job with education and providing opportunities for everybody.

A2: No complaints.

C: Okay, final set of questions. Do you think that Lowell has changed since you got here? When you go back to Gujarat and see the changes, do you feel like this city has changed too?

A1: Well, the one thing that I think has changed going back to high school is the downtown area. When we used to go there, we used to have to go downtown to catch the buses and it used to be unsafe. I used to rush out of school so I could get the early bus and not have to go downtown, because then I'd have to wait over there and the whole environment, but I think it's changed a lot now. My brother goes and they don't have to go to downtown, I think they made that safer for the kids. They have shuttles and they just connected the whole transportation between stations.

C: And I understand too that downtown has gotten a lot safer.

A1: Yeah, even when I drive by now...

A2: Cops are out and people. One time I had to be there at night and I was really scared, but I feel like it's getting safer, it's getting there.

C: Are you guys thinking about leaving Lowell at some point? Would you like to live in the city or will it depend on jobs and careers?

A1 & A2: Yeah, jobs.

C: What about your parents? Are they going to stay in Lowell?

A1: They always talk about moving but we'll see what my dad thinks.

C: Are your parents thinking about moving to Gujarat at some point? Retiring there or do they want to stay in the US?

A2: Well, when my parents moved here, they said, "We'll get you married and through school and then you can take care of your sister and we'll move back and retire there," but I doubt they'll go back.

A1: My dad always says that too.

C: Yeah but once you guys start to have kids and their grandkids are here, they're not going to go back. If there's one thing you could change in your experience as an immigrant in Lowell, what would it be? I know these are hard questions....

A1: I really can't think of anything because I always compare it with how it would have been if I was still living in Arizona and Lowell is so different from there.... It used to be such a small town and there was a lot of Indians there too, but not as much as here and you'd see the Indians and it would be the Indians and a bunch of white people. Here it's open. There are so many different communities it's just like a little world in itself.

C: So you like that better, to be in an open city and not in an enclave as in Arizona? Did you feel fenced in there a little bit?

A1: Yeah, a little bit, but I feel like there wasn't much to do for us.

A2: I can refer back to a friend who moved from Lowell to Kansas and she definitely misses Lowell. She never expected to miss it as much because Lowell is so alive, there's so much to do or something.

A1: You have your freedom here, there so much community everyone is used to seeing all the different cultures.

C: Does that network give you comfort?

A1: Yeah.

C: One last question, is there a question that I should have asked you that I didn't ask you?

A1: I can't think of one.

C: Okay then, thank-you so much.